

Vincent de Paul, a Leader for the Present Era

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I have always compared Vincent to a large thick forest, fearsome and difficult to traverse. Throughout history there have been individuals whose global movement can be immediately grasped. They present almost no complication to the observer. But Vincent de Paul's life, personality, psychology, journey, activity, spirituality, and institutions cannot be understood in any lineal manner because they did not develop in a lineal manner.

If we approach Vincent de Paul with a predetermined perspective, we will be surprised when this historical figure escapes our understanding. Nevertheless, that is the reality because we find ourselves standing before and reflecting upon a good and energetic person, an active and contemplative individual, an intellectual man who was not prone to intellectual debates and ramblings, traditional and innovative, collaborative, flexible (and at the same time inflexible), affective but not sentimental, ironic and at the same time serious, prayerful and committed, idealist but clearly in touch with reality, spendthrift yet economical, distrustful but trusting, a tireless worker who was repulsed by activism, committed to God and committed to a wide diversity of "neighbors". All of these opposing and, at times, contradictory characteristics can be documented with texts, anecdotes and decisions that Vincent made. In summary, Vincent was a man open to life... and life cannot be systematized.

But everyone is in agreement about one characteristic, namely, Vincent was a leader. If we analyze and reflect on Vincent's life and experience, on his existential development and his fundamental option, and on the unique gift that we refer to as charism... then, we immediately recognize the person of Vincent de Paul as a leader. In other words, we find ourselves in the presence of an individual who opened new horizons and paths, an individual who had, and continues to have, a great influence on countless situations.

There was no exaggeration when the bishop of Puy, Henri Maupas du Tour preached the funeral oration of Vincent de Paul and stated: *this man has totally changed the face of the Church*. Those words were not exaggerated because Vincent's influence and effective leadership was very evident not only in the Church and in French society, but also in so many areas beyond the borders of France.

A theme that is taken as a given

As we approach this theme of Vincent's leadership, we discover that there has been very little research done on this facet of Vincent's life. My impression is that the theme is taken as a given and yet it underlies all the other aspects of Vincent's life. We could say that there is nothing new or original about this theme because it is the special trait that characterized all of Vincent's life and ministry.

We constantly say that Vincent was ahead of his time, especially in those areas related to service on behalf of the poor and the struggle for the recognition of the dignity of those persons marginalized and excluded from participation in society. We also state that the institutions that Vincent founded bear an unmistakable stamp of originality. Furthermore, Vincent's boldness and creativity continually make his followers question themselves ... here we refer to his boldness and creativity in opening new paths that led to a change in the unjust and marginalizing religious, social, political and economic structures. We are also reassured that Vincent's economic and organizational vision with regard to the poor is a model for all of us living in the twenty-first century.

Therefore, when we speak about Vincent de Paul, we are taking for granted the fact that his leadership, his influence and his example are not limited to the events and situations of the seventeenth century. When we reflect on Vincent's words and activities, we are reflecting on someone whose moral convictions guided and attracted others to follow in his footsteps.

Referring to Vincent's leadership, someone has stated that in the twenty-first century there is such a need for that type of leadership that if it had not existed in the person and the activity of Vincent de Paul, then, we would have had to find a way to invent it.

The leadership of Vincent de Paul

When we use the word, *leader* or pronounce the word, *leadership*, we immediately associate those words with multiple concepts: someone who is at the head of some group; someone who wins a competition; someone who is able to attract others to participate in a social, religious or political movement; someone who is able to exercise power and influence over a group; one who with a certain authority guides a group of followers; one who stands out above others because of his/her ideas and/or actions ...

We are dealing with a word that linguists refer to as *polysemic*, that is, a word that has many meanings but always has a common denominator: there is always a reference to guiding, directing, conducting or moving ahead of others in the area of ideas and action.

Can we apply all of this to Vincent de Paul? Certainly... but with one important note: in his leadership style Vincent incorporated a specific yet fundamental element, namely, service. Usually we associate a leader with power and authority but in Vincent de Paul leadership is exercised through service on behalf of those who are poor, who are in need, and who are vulnerable,

Vincent de Paul was very clear about Jesus' teaching about leadership as stated in the Gospel of Luke: *The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them and those in authority over them are addressed as "benefactors"; but among you it shall not be so. Rather, let the greatest among you be as the youngest, and the leader as the servant* (Luke 22:15-26). Vincent was also very clear with regard to the example of the Master: *You call me "teacher" and "master", and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet* (John 13:14-15).

Thus, we can apply to Vincent de Paul the definition of leadership that was expressed by a North American sociologist: *Leadership is the ability to influence people so that they work enthusiastically toward the achievement of goals directed toward the common good and especially toward the good of the most needy members of society*. Indeed, in Vincentian spirituality, everything must be referred to the poor. Such was the case from the time of their origin and so now everything must lead inevitably to the integral liberation of the poor. Events and the needs of the poor shaped and energized the various Vincentian institutions and ministries, so also today events and the needs of the poor continue to guarantee our fidelity to the true Vincentian spirit. According to Vincent's thinking and in accord with the thinking of all Vincentians today, nothing has meaning or significance apart from the poor. Everything becomes credible when viewed from the perspective of the poor and when viewed in light of the present situation of those who are poor.

Three basic principles of Vincent's leadership

When speaking of Vincent de Paul as a leader, the first thing we must do is investigate the roots and the source of that leadership. In other words, *from where* is Vincent's leadership derived. This is important because we should not forget that the source of leadership can be clear or obscure, it can originate from hidden interests or from ethical issues. We must also remember that Vincent de Paul

was not the leader of an NGO or of a humanist/altruistic group. Vincent de Paul was a believer who made an irrevocable choice to follow Jesus Christ in and for the service of the poor.

That is why Vincent's leadership rests upon three fundamental principles. On several occasions Vincent referred to those principles when he stated: *This is my faith, this is my experience*. The principles are the following:

A) *The primacy of God*: Vincent experienced God as the one who brought him out of the land of Egypt, that is, the one who freed him from his ambitious, selfish and worldly attitude. Then God led Vincent through an exodus event (an event that was filled with doubt and many hesitations), to the promised land (to an option of total surrender and commitment). Vincent de Paul knew that he had arrived at this new place not by his own efforts, but by the guiding hand of God. Thus, Vincent was convinced that his leadership was not the result of his intelligence or of some strategy that he himself designed, but his leadership was a gift of God.

Vincent de Paul did not speak about *charism* (in fact, he never used that word), but he was aware of the fact that the institutions that he founded and the projects that he designed and carried out came from God. When asked about the origin of his works, he often answered: *I said to myself, "did you ever dream of founding a Company of Sisters? Oh no, not !! Was it Mlle Le Gras? Just as little". I can tell you the truth that I never thought of it.*¹ That was Vincent's manner of referring to the charism that today, four hundred years later, we celebrate with much joy.

The great historian of French spirituality, Henri Bremond, summarized this principle in the following manner: *It was not the poor who brought Vincent de Paul to God, but it was God who led the poor to Vincent de Paul.*

B) *Christ incarnated in the history suffering*: Vincent de Paul became a saint, not an activist. Vincent de Paul and his followers made a *fundamental option for the poor*. That option was made from the perspective of an earlier option, namely, an option for Jesus Christ, the evangelizer and servant of the poor, *the man-for-others, the dispossessed, the servant, the servant in life and the servant in death*. It is, however, important to clarify that this is not a question of two separate and distinct options, but rather two dimensions or two moments in one and the same option. Vincentian identity is Christocentric, and therefore its option for the poor can only be understood in light of the reality that the cause of the poor is the cause of Christ.

Therefore, it is easy to conclude that the leadership of Vincent de Paul is not to be seen as that of an individual who placed himself at the head of a political, social or merely humanistic organization. The leadership of Vincent de Paul is characterized by his radical following of Christ and responds to the principles that Christ left us: the grain of wheat must die in order

¹ Vincent de Paul, *Correspondence, Conference, Documents*, translators: Helen Marie Law, DC (Vol. 1), Marie Poole, DC (Vol. 1-13b), James King, CM (Vol. 1-2), Francis Germovnik, CM (Vol. 1-8, 13a-13b [Latin]), Esther Cavanagh, DC (Vol. 2), Ann Mary Dougherty, DC (Vol. 12); Evelynne Franc, DC (Vol. 13a-13b), Thomas Davitt, CM (Vol. 13a-13b [Latin]), Glennon E. Figge, CM (Vol. 13a-13b [Latin]), John G. Nugent, CM (Vol. 13a-13b [Latin]), Andrew Spellman, CM (Vol. 13a-13b [Latin]); edited: Jacqueline Kilar, DC (Vol. 1-2), Marie Poole, DC (Vol. 2-13b), Julia Denton, DC [editor-in-chief] (Vol. 3-10, 13a-13b), Paule Freeburg, DC (Vol. 3), Mirian Hamway, DC (Vol. 3), Elinor Hartman, DC (Vol. 4-10, 13a-13b), Ellen Van Zandt, DC (Vol. 9-13b), Ann Mary Dougherty (Vol. 11-12); annotated: John W. Carven, CM (Vol. 1-13b); New City Press, Brooklyn and Hyde Park, 1985-2009, volume IX, p. 165, 192. Future references to this work will be inserted into the text using the initials [CCD] followed by the volume number, followed by the page number, for example, CCD:IX:165, 192.

to bear fruit, love to the extreme, lay down one's life for others, do the will of the Father, live as one who serves, be merciful as the Father ...

C) The poor, God's incredible question: Like Cain, so also Vincent is confronted by God's question: *where is your brother?* (Genesis 4:9). In order to respond to that question Vincent had to take a decisive step: his brothers and sisters, the poor, could not continue to be a statistic or "the dumping ground for nice sounding pietistic and ideological phrases". The poor had to become an essential part of Vincent's life, morality and faith ... they had to become his *dominant passion*. Therefore, on October 8, 1649, Vincent wrote to M. Almerás and stated: *the poor, who do not know where to go or what to do, who are suffering already and who increase daily, are my burden and my sorrow* (CCD:III:492).

Yes, this incredible question of God put into movement Vincent's leadership and he became involved in what he referred to as *God's business*, namely, the struggle for justice, the defense of the poor and making other people aware of the plight of the poor. That question, *where is your brother*, impelled Vincent to become the Good Samaritan.

A vital force and two inevitable convictions

The French philosopher, Henri Bergson, introduced a very famous expression into philosophical thinking, *élan vital*, which can be translated as *the vital force* or *impulse of life*.

The leader, Vincent de Paul, found this *vital force* in the strength of the Spirit... the Spirit that led him, that preserved him, that animated him. We refer to this vital force as Vincentian spirituality. Without that spirituality, Vincent's leadership would have become bureaucracy, propaganda and/or empty activism.

Vincent's spirituality is one of *open eyes*. In other words, a spirituality that Pope Francis described when he stated: *Let us open our hearts to those living on the outermost fringes of society! ... Let us open our eyes and see the misery of the world, the wounds of our brothers and sisters who are denied their dignity, and let us recognize that we are compelled to heed their cry for help!* (*Misericordiae Vultus*, #15). We are not talking about an abstract spirituality that is far removed from the suffering of the poor and the disinherited.

Indeed, we are referring to a spirituality of incarnation in the victims of the oppressive system, reaching out to the lowest members of society, commitment of disinterested service on behalf of those most abandoned and forgotten, missionary outreach in order to bring comfort, mercy and the Good News to the poor and needy.

At the same time, however, it must be noted that this vital force, this spirituality, led Vincent de Paul to two inevitable convictions. Vincent de Paul's leadership cannot be understood apart from a series of convictions that characterized his life and his works. Leaders in any area of life can do nothing unless they are imbued with certain convictions. Vincent de Paul was a leader with convictions.

Here we are going to highlight two convictions that are at the root of Vincent's life and commitment.

A) The poor, the sacrament of Christ – Using the language of the Second Vatican Council and of post-Conciliar theology, we could say that the poor are the sacrament of Christ, a real expression of Christ, the preferential place for an encounter with the crucified and suffering God.

These present day theological formulations would not have been expressed in that manner by Vincent de Paul. Nevertheless, it is clear that these concepts are part of the unique, living patrimony of Vincentian spirituality. These concepts are rooted in the twenty-fifty chapter of Saint Mathew's gospel: *whatever you did for ones of these least brothers/sisters of mine, you did for me* (Matthew 25:40).

Therefore, through the eyes of faith, Vincent discovered that the poor, before being the beneficiaries of his services and care, were first and foremost the visible presence of the crucified Lord in the midst of the world.

- B) The poor, our lords and masters** – Even though this expression did not originate with Vincent de Paul, nevertheless, Vincent's practical application of those words gave them a uniqueness that has been passed on to his followers. Because the poor are *the suffering image of Our Master*, they become *our lords and masters*. Therefore, Vincentians must love and serve the poor in the same way that they love and serve our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

From a sociological perspective, Vincent made a complementary application. From experience Vincent understood the relationship between master and servant. He knew that some aristocratic masters were frequently demanding, unjust, capricious and ungrateful. Nevertheless, in the majority of cases, their servants cared for them throughout their life, and even did so with a certain love.

Now, however, those masters, many times harsh, demanding, vulgar and ungrateful ... those masters are the poor and Vincentians are to be their servants (not in view of obtaining a salary nor out of fear). Rather Vincentians are to be their servants out of love and because with the eyes of faith they discover in those persons who are oppressed, a Christ who does not call them to ecstatic contemplation but calls them to effective service, love and solidarity.

The poor are constituted as our *lords and masters* because their situation and their needs reveal God's will to us. Furthermore, it is the poor who lead us to Jesus Christ.

Strengths of Vincent's leadership style

In addition to some basic elements and an incarnated spirituality as well as some firm convictions, every leader weaves his approach with certain strengths that, in some way, mold his personality and identity. In the case of Vincent de Paul those strengths would involve all the various circumstances, actions, events, signs... everything that had to do with the humanization process, the dignity, the promotion and the integral liberation of the poor, marginalized and disinherited. Here, however, we highlight the following:

- A) Reaching out to the world of the poor and the excluded** – When Vincent de Paul (in the words of Pope Francis) *touched the wounds of Christ in the wounds of the poor*, his life was totally changed and he became the leader of an evangelization project and a movement of humanizing liberation.

His involvement in a work on behalf of the poor flowed from the impact of the situation in which the poor found themselves. It is imperative to analyze and to become involved in the midst of the reality of the victims of unjust and inhuman systems. In the gospel parable, the Good Samaritan reached out to his "wounded and abused neighbor" and therefore, *he was moved to compassion* (Luke 10:30-36). Openness to the reality of the

poor, understanding the world of inequality, deprivation and injustice and allowing that world to penetrate one's interior ... all of these are essential if we want to understand Vincent de Paul's leadership and also, if we want to understand the present day mission of all members of the Vincentian Family.

- B) The vision of reality understood from the perspective of God and at the same time with one's heart focused on God** – There is no doubt about the fact that the world is seen in a distinct manner when viewed from the peripheries than when viewed from the palaces of the rich, different when viewed from the mud and fenced in refugee centers then from the great avenues and the boardrooms of the directors of multinational corporations, different when viewed from those situations in which life is threatened than from those situations in which life is all comfort and ease. The mind and heart of Vincent de Paul were transformed when his eyes gazed upon and scrutinized life from the underside of history.

Vincent de Paul, however, became a leader when he looked at the world with the eyes of God, that is, with a gaze of mercy, tenderness and compassion. Vincent de Paul's gaze was not that of the sociologist or of the formal, legalistic cleric ... rather, it was the gaze of the Father who is moved by the reality of his children who are abandoned, forgotten and deprived of dignity.

- C) The deaconate of charity with a distinctive and characteristic seal** – When I use the phrase, *deaconate of service*, I am referring to the service of charity, the mission of charity or, as Vincent would say, the state of charity. In the deaconate of service, we find perfect union, charity, justice, mercy, service, sacrifice, the civilization of love, advocacy, humanness ...

The deaconate of charity gives unity and integrity to all Vincentian institutions and that same deaconate of charity distinguishes all Vincentian institutions and activities in the church and in society. It is the characteristic seal that the leader, Vincent de Paul, imprinted on his surroundings. The Confraternities of Charity, with their distinctive name, became the first witnesses (in time and in space) to this deaconate of charity.

- D) Sensitivity as a fundamental attitude** – *To be a Christian and to see our brothers and sisters suffering without weeping with them, without being sick with them... that's to be lacking in charity; it's being a caricature of a Christian; it's inhuman; it's to be worse than animals (CCD:XII:222).* As a logical and natural effect of charity, Vincent highlights the element of sensitivity. Without sensitivity there is no openness to the poor nor is there any desire to approach them... without sensitivity there is no good news for the poor. On the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Jericho, on that road which is the road of life, the lack of sensitivity makes us exploitive... makes us like the assailants, like the priest and Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan. On more than one occasion I have heard it said that we, as Vincentians, have to be experts in the area of social sensitivity... indeed, that is the challenge that Vincent has passed on to us.

- E) The organization of charity** – On Sunday, August 20th, 1617, in the village of Châtillon-les-Dombes (France), the pastor, Vincent de Paul, having witnessed the massive and generous charity of his parishioners as they assisted a poor, infirm family, stated: *there is great charity here but it is not well-organized.* His organization of the charitable activity of that village gave rise to the first of Vincent's institutions, namely, the Confraternity of Charity which is known today as the AIC, the International Association of Charity.

The coordinated organization of charity is the very heart of the Vincentian charism and mission. Such organization, however, ought to be bold and creative. John Paul II called for *a new creativity in charity (Novo Millennio Ineunte, #50)* ... a new and renewed charity for these new times. This new creativity in charity is demanded by the new situations and the new victims of the globalization of indifference. Good order in providing assistance and in the meticulous organization of charity were always great concerns of Vincent de Paul. That is clearly seen in the Rule for the Confraternity at Châtillon-les-Dombes which describes the objective of the Confraternity in the following words: *to assist spiritually and corporally the people of their town who have sometimes suffered a great deal, more through a lack of organized assistance than from lack of charitable persons (CCD:XIIIb:8).*

Vincent's strategy as a leader

If we were to ask Vincent about the means that he utilized in the exercise of his leadership on behalf of the poor, there is no doubt that he would respond with the phrase: *with the strength of our arms and the sweat of our brows (CCD:XI:32)* or as Vincent insisted: *all our work consists in action (CCD:XI:33).*

Vincent did not follow some manual on leadership nor did he act in accord with a specific strategy. As someone has pointed out, it could be said that in the mind of Vincent de Paul all legitimate means were appropriate for service and for the liberation of the poor. Nevertheless, we can point out some elements that Vincent utilized and developed in his exercise of leadership ... elements that are also relevant today.

- A) Empowerment of the person, especially women** – In order to carry out his mission, this element was most important. In other words, Vincent involved people in an active manner in the struggle against poverty... and he was especially mindful of the involvement of women. Vincent realized that he alone could not accomplish his plan with regard to the liberation of those persons who were poor. Therefore, he surrounded himself with people and instilled in them his spirit, his courage, his attitudes and his convictions. Furthermore, he established various groups that would continue his work. This empowerment and involvement was done in many different ways: through his letters and his conferences, through the Rules that he established for the Confraternities of Charity, through his advice and counsel...
- B) Knowing how to bring out the best in people** – Those persons who collaborated with Vincent de Paul were ordinary people, not heroes. Vincent, however, knew how to bring out the best in people; he convinced people that they could and should collaborate in carrying out his plans and he instilled in people strength, boldness and constancy. In the film, *Monsieur Vincent*, there is a scene in which Louise de Marillac speaks about her fears and her hesitations in carrying out the mission entrusted to her... Vincent responds: *you are strong and courageous and capable. I need you.*
- C) A movement from giving “a handout” to advocacy and prophetic denunciation and engagement in the struggle to change inhuman and unjust structures** – Vincent never looked down upon providing people with some form of immediate material assistance. Hunger, illness, physical and spiritual misery, social abandonment, war, unemployment, marginalization ... all of those realities impelled Vincent to organize assistance and relief. On one occasion he stated: *we are to run to the spiritual needs of our neighbor as if we were running to a fire (CCD:XI:25).* Vincent was convinced that there was always a need to provide assistance, but those efforts had to be organized. In that way he avoided covering over blatant injustices as well as simply providing people with “a hand out”.

Vincent complemented his “hand outs” with projects of social advocacy so that the poor themselves (individually and as a group) would become ever more conscious of their situation, their dignity, and their rights and thus, become protagonists of their own integral development.

Furthermore, Vincent prophetically denounced the injustices of his era and engaged in a process that changed existing inhuman structures. Among his actions we highlight here his public and radical opposition to the exploitive policies of the prime minister, Cardinal Mazarin... he asked him to resign his office. Vincent also spoke against certain governmental and ecclesiastical projects that deprived the poor of their freedom. In summary, Vincent’s defense of the dignity of the person became a fundamental building block in the construction of a new society.

- D) Boldness** – Vincent de Paul was a leader who did not want things to remain as they were, but sought change. He wanted to change the situation of the poor. Therefore, his establishments, his plans and his activity reveal his daring, his courage and his boldness. He did not hesitate to engage in new and innovative projects... projects that were, in a certain sense, revolutionary. He also did not hesitate to establish various institutions: the Confraternity of Charity and the Company of the Daughters of Charity. In those establishments, women became the protagonists and the instruments who became involved in the struggle for respect with regard to the dignity of the poor. All of that occurred at a time when women were excluded from participation in the Church and in society. At the time of the establishment of the Confraternities, Vincent stated: *for eight hundred years or so, women have had no public role in the Church... but now divine Providence is turning today to some of you to supply what was lacking to the sick poor* (CCD:XIIIb:432).

In the Vincentian language, *boldness* refers to zeal, to the fire that enkindles, illuminates and consumes those who possess it. Vincent highlighted that reality when he stated: *if love of God is a fire, zeal is its flame; if love is a sun, zeal is its ray... zeal prompts us to rise above all sorts of difficulties, not only by the power of reason, but also by the power of grace* (CCD:XII:250).

- E) Creativity** – Vincent was a leader who not only emphasized boldness, but also was very creative. If there is anything that should not be part of a leader’s personality, then it is routine, apathy, and laziness.

Vincent was very aware of the evils that resulted from laziness and routine. He saw those evils revealed in an ignorant and bourgeois clergy, in men who were more eager to advance in their clerical career than to engage in a process of reform and renewal. He also saw those evils revealed in a Church that was closed in upon itself and attached to power and money. In light of the experience of Jesus Christ, the passionate servant of the poor, Vincent engaged in a daring search for new methods, new forms and new expressions of service. His leadership provides us with a very concrete lesson: service on behalf of the poor demands a change of attitude that enables one to move beyond “doing things as they have always been done”.

- F) Discernment** – In addition to being a faithful, radical and committed Christian, Vincent was also a clear and intelligent leader. Vincent was not impulsive or given to uncontrolled

emotional outbursts. Rather he analyzed and reflected on the signs of the times and then he attacked the root causes of unjust situations. In other words, Vincent engaged in a process of discernment. That process led Vincent to state: *we live on the sweat of the poor* (CCD:XI:190); therefore, we have to seek that which is best for those persons who are poor, for our lords and masters.

I have always been struck by the perspicacity of Vincent de Paul in all his works and projects. He could be wrong, but he was never fooled by first impressions or by the attractiveness of false and misleading projects. The situation with regard to the General Hospital can be seen as a paradigm of the serious discernment that Vincent engaged in as he served the poor. At a time when all his collaborators were delighted and excited about this project of the Hospital, Vincent de Paul discovered and felt that this was not the best thing for the poor and that the project would lead to the repression and the condemnation of the poor.

G) Permanent and on-going formation – Vincent de Paul became aware of a reality that, today, seems very evident: without formation, there can be no quality service nor change of attitude with regard to our relationship with the poor. We need only begin to read the Rule of the first Confraternities of Charity and we become immediately aware of that fact. In that Rule, Vincent insisted upon an integral formation: human, Christian, professional...

Because we must provide quality service to the poor, it becomes absolutely necessary that we are open to on-going formation as well as spiritual development (which in turn provides a dynamic to our “being” and our “doing”). This openness should include a willingness to acquire a greater understanding about the world of the poor and about the social environment in which they live. At the same time, we must constantly renew and up-date our methods and forms of service.

A final word

Nobody denies that Vincent is a leader for our era. We, however, as the followers of this leader, have to ask ourselves some questions. For example, do we follow this radical and demanding leader or as time has passed, do we find it difficult to follow in Vincent’s footsteps? Through our actions on behalf of the poor, through our pastoral approach and through our methods, do we reveal Vincent as a living and relevant leader? Do we take as a given the fact that Vincent is a leader and then on the practical level forget about that reality? Bob Dylan, in one of his songs, stated: *the answer is blowing in the wind...* on this occasion, however, the answer is in each one of us.